

Additional Information

Tips For Observing and Photographing Dragonflies

Dragonflies can be loosely lumped into categories of “perchers” or “flyers”. Perchers, such as some of the skimmers, have a usual or favorite perch which they return to repeatedly. Some flyers have a usual route, a beat which they fly back and forth in the same area. You can pre-focus your camera or binoculars on that area to get a close look. Some have a large, long beat and are more difficult to predict, so some luck and persistence are required to find them perched. Most odonates are most active in the middle of the day, but some are more active early and late, roosting most of the day in the shade. Be prepared, research and study your subjects first to know the preferred habitats. Binoculars, especially close-focus binoculars are a great aid for observing all nature subjects.

Approach slowly, getting closer and snapping away as you go (with today’s digital cameras, you can always delete later), a good distant shot is better than none and will be some aid in identifying later.

Try to align planes of focus; for example, a side view is usually good, so move to the side for a clear side view of the dragonfly. A “3/4 view” can show face and eyes as well as the side. Some field marks are more important than others in differentiating one species from another. Get more than one angle if possible.

Sun at your back is always good for photographic detail but be ready to use flash to “fill” in the detail on the shadow side if the subject is back-lit or in any dark situation.

About ATBI

This brochure was compiled and developed by the All Taxa Biodiversity Inventory (ATBI) group. ATBI is an on-going project in Tennessee State Parks and State Natural Areas. The goal of ATBI is to document all species in Tennessee State Parks, monitor long-term trends in specific taxonomic groups, and promote education about and preservation of all biodiversity with increased science and citizen education efforts. To access the ATBI database, go to www.tn.gov/environment/parks/atbi.

For more information about ATBI, please contact David Hill, 7th Floor, L & C Tower, 401 Church St., Nashville, TN 37243. Email david.r.hill@tn.gov. Phone 615-253-2455.

Dragonfly References

Beaton, Giff. 2007. Dragonflies and Damselflies of Georgia and the Southeast. A Wormsloe Foundation Nature Book.

Dunkle, Sidney. 2000. Dragonflies through Binoculars: A Field Guide to Dragonflies of North America. Oxford University Press.

Nikula, Blair et al. 2002. Stokes Beginner's Guide to Dragonflies. Little, Brown & Company.

<http://www.odonatacentral.org/>. Dragonfly Society of the Americas. This site has checklists of dragonflies by county.

Collecting of plants or animals in state parks and natural areas is prohibited. Please help preserve Tennessee's natural heritage by leaving plants and animals for others to enjoy.

SOUTH CUMBERLAND RECREATION AREA

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www.tn.gov/environment/parks/SouthCumberland/

TENNESSEE STATE PARKS DIVISION OF RESOURCE MANAGEMENT



All Taxa Biodiversity Inventory (ATBI)

Dragonflies and Damselflies of South Cumberland Recreation Area and Grundy County



Photo © Richard Connors

Welcome to the wonderful world of dragonflies at beautiful South Cumberland Recreation Area! Of the approximate 155 species of odonates (dragonflies and damselflies) in Tennessee, 44 have been documented in this park or Grundy County.

Pictured above is a Widow Skimmer (*Libellula luctuosa*), male. A common "percher", widow skimmers are found near lakes, ponds and slow sections of streams. Both males and females have the solid black wing stripes next to the body. You can remember this one by: "the Widow wears black next to the body". The female has a dark brown abdomen with a bright yellow stripe down the sides.

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Dragonfly and Damselfly Checklist of South Cumberland Recreation Area and Grundy County

Damselflies (Zygoptera)

Broad-winged Damselflies (Calopterygidae)

- ☐ Ebony Jewelwing

Spreadwings (Lestidae)

- ☐ Swamp Spreadwing

Pond Damselflies (Coenagrionidae)

- ☐ Blue-fronted Dancer
- ☐ Variable Dancer
- ☐ Violet Dancer
- ☐ Powdered Dancer
- ☐ Double-striped Bluet
- ☐ Turquoise Bluet
- ☐ Stream Bluet
- ☐ Skimming Bluet
- ☐ Orange Bluet
- ☐ Fragile Forktail
- ☐ Rambur's Forktail

Dragonflies (Anisoptera)

Darners (Aeshnidae)

- ☐ Common Green Darner
- ☐ Comet Darner
- ☐ Fawn Darner
- ☐ Swamp Darner
- ☐ Cyrano Darner

Clubtails (Gomphidae)

- ☐ Lancet Clubtail
- ☐ Ashy Clubtail
- ☐ Dragonhunter

Spiketails (Cordulegastridae)

- ☐ Tiger Spiketail

Cruisers (Macromiidae)

- ☐ Stream Cruiser

Emeralds (Corduliidae)

- ☐ Common Baskettail
- ☐ Prince Baskettail
- ☐ Clamp-tipped Emerald

Skimmers (Libellulidae)

- ☐ Calico Pennant
- ☐ Halloween Pennant
- ☐ Banded Pennant
- ☐ Swift Setwing
- ☐ Eastern Pondhawk
- ☐ Blue Corporal
- ☐ Golden-winged Skimmer
- ☐ Spangled Skimmer
- ☐ Slaty Skimmer
- ☐ Widow Skimmer
- ☐ Great Blue Skimmer
- ☐ Blue Dasher
- ☐ Wandering Glider
- ☐ Eastern Amberwing
- ☐ Common Whitetail
- ☐ Autumn Meadowhawk
- ☐ Carolina Saddlebags
- ☐ Black Saddlebags

Habitat

This region contains rich biological diversity and some of the highest numbers of federally listed species. The forests of the Cumberlands are among the most biologically diverse, temperate-zone forests in the world, and harbor an large variety of plants, fish, mussels, salamanders, fungi, and other species, many of which are endemic to the region. The area also contains an extensive karst region, with thousands of caves which support a diverse assemblage of cave fauna.

Good spots

*Stream, stream-side and emergent vegetation, like the Blue Hole area at Greeter Falls

*Lake, lake-side and emergent vegetation, especially at Grundy Lakes

*Fields and meadows such as the Meadow Trail at South Cumberland

*Trails, sunny spots and seeps

Notes
